

**EUROPEAN TRADERS IN REGIONAL TRADE OF MALAY  
ARCHIPELAGO, 1681 – 1792**

by

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## EUROPEAN TRADERS IN REGIONAL TRADE OF MALAY ARCHIPELAGO, 1681 –1792

### ABSTRACT

This study of economic history covers the period between 1681 – 1792 and is confined to Melaka and other ports in the Malay Archipelago. During the Dutch period, Melaka was a major port frequented by many types of traders namely the Bugis, Malay, Chinese and European traders. The activities of European regional and long distance traders contributed to the importance of Melaka although these traders made up only one third of the total traders coming and leaving Melaka each year. This research shows that Melaka was not a dead port after 1511 as indicated by using the Melaka Shipping Lists, which record all ship movements on a daily basis. Since 1681 trade volumes increased despite setbacks in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century due to the world economic slump but it did not jeopardize the fame of Melaka. The impact of the Dutch monopoly system hindered European traders from trading in Batavia as most important commodities were placed into the Dutch monopoly. Commodities were cheaper in Melaka and other ports in the Malay Archipelago and this became an attraction to European traders notably English traders. English private and country traders sailing between India and China became important in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and they conducted trade in smaller ports in the archipelago. English traders tried to bypass the Dutch ports by founding Penang and Singapore. Melaka became stagnant at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century after the emergence of these new ports and its importance was taken over by the English ports. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century a new economic system gradually replaced the long distance trade and since then Melaka began to decline.

# PEDAGANG EROPAH DALAM PERDAGANGAN SERANTAU DI KEPULAUAN MELAYU, 1681 – 1792

## ABSTRAK

Kajian sejarah ekonomi ini merangkumi tahun 1681 – 1792 dan bertumpu di Melaka serta pelabuhan lain di Kepulauan Melayu. Pada zaman pemerintahan Belanda, Melaka merupakan sebuah pelabuhan yang dikunjungi pelbagai pedagang seperti Bugis, Melayu, Cina dan Eropah. Aktiviti pedagang Eropah serantau dan jarak jauh penting kepada Melaka walaupun pedagang Eropah hanya merupakan satu pertiga daripada keseluruhan pedagang yang mengunjungi Melaka. Penyelidikan ini membuktikan bahawa Melaka bukanlah sebuah pelabuhan yang tidak bermaya selepas 1511 seperti yang digambarkan oleh "Melaka Shipping Lists" yang merekod pergerakan kapal pada setiap hari. Kadar perdagangan meningkat sejak tahun 1681 walaupun terdapat kesan kemelesetan ekonomi dunia pada awal kurun ke-18 namun ianya tidak menjejaskan kedudukan Melaka. Sistem monopoli Belanda telah menghalang pedagang Eropah daripada berdagang di Betawi kerana kebanyakan komoditi penting telah dimasukkan ke dalam senarai monopoli. Barang dagangan adalah lebih murah di Melaka dan pelabuhan lain di Kepulauan Melayu dan ini menjadi satu daya tarikan kepada pedagang Eropah terutamanya pedagang Inggeris. Pedagang swasta Inggeris dan antarabangsa (country traders) yang belayar di antara China dan India menjadi penting pada abad ke-18. Pedagang-pedagang ini mula belayar ke pelabuhan-pelabuhan serantau yang lebih kecil. Pedagang Inggeris cuba mengelakkan pelabuhan yang dikawal Belanda dengan mengasaskan Pulau Pinang dan Singapura. Pelabuhan Melaka menjadi mundur pada akhir abad ke-18 selepas munculnya pelabuhan baru dan kepentingan Melaka diambilalih oleh pelabuhan Inggeris. Menjelang abad ke-19 sistem ekonomi yang baru beransur-ansur menggantikan sistem perdagangan jarak jauh dan sejak itu pelabuhan Melaka merosot.



## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### **The main idea of the study**

Many scholars have regarded Melaka after 1511, as a dead port, and the queen city's reputation had gone with the coming of the Portuguese. It is also commonly believed that trade had never recovered after the Dutch took over the port in 1641. Development and economic consumption took place very much later, with the coming of the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most scholars concentrated their study on the English period as English is widely used in the primary sources. There are not many writings between the Portuguese and Dutch periods due to problems with source material. Even when these sources are available, one faces language obstacles. Dutch sources are well kept in the archives but one needs to be familiar with the old style of Dutch language.

This research covers the period of the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the whole of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, namely from 1681 to 1792, during which time, the Dutch controlled the Straits of Melaka, while Batavia became the Dutch administration centre. The main primary sources are the Dutch records kept in micro-film and consist mainly of ship movements. On their arrival, skippers had to report to the harbour master who was responsible for checking and issuing passes for private shipping.<sup>1</sup> Dealing with the harbour masters' records was not an easy task, because all information was hand written in Dutch with its peculiar style. At times, the records were difficult to decipher, while the information was not always uniform. This means that a considerable amount of time had to be spent reading and analyzing these primary sources before they could be transformed into a database.

The first step was to extract information from the harbour masters' list, which recorded the incoming entries and voyages of ships in the port of Melaka and to other ports. This information

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<sup>1</sup> Gerrit Knaap, *Shallow Waters, Rising Tide: Shipping and Trade in Java Around 1775* ( Leiden: KTILV Press, 1996 ), p. 26.

was collected on a daily basis, with records of ships in Melaka beginning from 1681 until 1792. These were later transformed into a larger data-base. There are many series of the Melaka harbour-master's records and these began in 1677 and the entire list ended in 1792. The records started thirty six years after the Dutch took over Melaka. Due to various reasons, there are no more such records after the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The Dutch East India Company (VOC) faced various trading problems as a new breed of businessman came into the picture and replaced the old generation of traders. The younger generation of traders did not take part in long distance journeys, and the trade pattern changed as the VOC moved into the modern era. As a result, the VOC was closed down in 1795 and this coincided with the outbreak of the Napoleonic wars in Europe. In writing the economic and social history of the Malay Archipelago, there are other shipping lists used, such as the shipping list of Batavia which was done by the historian Gerrit Knaap. Gerrit Knaap conducted a thorough study of the shipping lists for fifteen ports in Java from 1775-1776 for his book, *Shallow Waters: Shipping and Trade in Java Around 1775* (Leiden: KITLV, 1996). Gerrit Knaap had placed Batavia as his nucleus of study, and he wrote about traders who were here and their trade with other surrounding ports. Besides shipping lists for Batavia and Melaka, a wealth of information on the domestic economy for Ambon and Makasar was also available from 1620 – 1795.<sup>2</sup>

The database for the present research covers a long period of time, approximately 100 years; and there are certain gaps in between the time frame up to 1743. The period starts from 1681 and ends in 1792. A close scrutiny shows that some minor gaps occurred and another major gap occurred between 1743 and 1760 while minor gaps or missing records are for 1683, 1685 – 1694

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<sup>2</sup> M.R. Fernando, "Quantifying the Economic and Social History of Southeast Asia" in *New Terrains in Southeast Asian History*, Abu Talib Ahmad and Tan Liok Ee ( eds ) ( Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003 ), pp. 62 – 63.



and 1734. These are the periods where no information is available and no records about the coming of ships to Melaka or their voyages in the harbour-master's lists. It is possible that the missing lists were not filed, nor entered in the registers. They were not sent to Amsterdam or they may still kept in the Jakarta national archives.<sup>3</sup> There are also differences in the recording of commodities for the early 1700s and the years after 1760s. In the later years the commodities were not recorded in detail. For example, Chinese wares were recorded as of various sorts while the actual type and its quantity were not mentioned. At certain times, the names of goods were not given at all. This happened possibly due to too many ships coming into Melaka after the 1760s and the increasing duties of the harbour master in the port.

Dutch primary sources are located in the final layer of evidence lying at the bottom of other layers of documents such as the Governor's reports and letters from Melaka to Batavia or Amsterdam. Historians normally bypassed this type of evidence, as most of the information was buried under a large number of reports, which were considered more important. Reports and letters were also easier to come by as they were compiled in logical order or books, and were processed with explicit information. In certain circumstances, scholars knew about the shipping lists but proper and comprehensive analysis has not been done using these records.

I could not claim to be the first to use the Melaka Shipping Lists. Dr. Lee Kam Hing has made good use of the records to describe shipping in Melaka under Dutch rule. In his article, "The Shipping Lists of Dutch Melaka; A source for the study of Coastal Trade and Shipping in the Malay Peninsula during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century," Lee had observed the various types of ships used by traders in Melaka. Dr. Radin Fernando also had used the same Melaka Shipping Lists for his research but his focus is on the overall pattern of the types of traders operating in Melaka which include the Malay, Bugis, Chinese and European traders in the straits. My research covers a

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<sup>3</sup> Lee Kam Hing, "The Shipping Lists of Dutch Melaka: A Source for the Study of Coastal Trade and Shipping in the Malay Peninsula during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries" in *Kapal dan Harta Karam, Ships and the Sunken Treasure* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Muzium Malaysia, 1986 ), p. 57.

different aspect, which focuses on the local and long distance European traders operating within the archipelago and between India and China. As far as I know I am the first scholar to conduct an extensive research on European ship movements which show that Melaka was not a dead port after 1511.

In a normal pattern, history recorded great events and great people and historians spent their time writing lengthy essays about events known far and wide. Great men created history and they became the magnet for history writers. Commoners were neglected and unable to secure a place in history. Monotonous common life and ordinary trading activities did not attract the attention of these historians. Yet the ordinary people do shape modern economic and social history. At a closer look it was the common people who helped to provide us with information through their activities in the age of commerce.

It is not an easy task to deal with these records as serious efforts were needed to gather every piece of information through their entries and voyages out of Melaka. The daily record, the entries, and voyages vary from more than ten to a hundred ships recorded at Melaka, and this monotonous job was carried out by the officials of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). The information was collected into a data base, and analyzed using complicated computer programs. Some ordering of the information was necessary before it could be useful to the scholars.<sup>4</sup> This daunting task proved worth the effort, as considerable information was gathered through the shipping lists, and this enabled us to get a picture of trade and trading activities in the Indonesian Archipelago and the involvement of European traders in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century.

For the Dutch government, the shipping lists were important in monitoring the movement and volume of shipping in the Straits of Melaka. The movements of ships were important in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century as the VOC had planned to develop Batavia as its principal entrepot

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

centre and to direct ships to Batavia.<sup>5</sup> Although the Melaka Shipping list provides us with much information, it is still incomplete, and secondary sources are necessary to explain certain scenarios in history. For instance, we were able to get a picture of Benkalis becoming a major port to European traders in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, and gold becoming one of the important commodities transacted out of the port. But there is no explanation as to why Benkalis gold was highly sought after in India, or the wide use of the precious metal. However the Melaka Shipping List was complemented by secondary sources like books, reports, and journals to complete the sources for studying the Dutch period.

To facilitate the research work, the entire period is divided into two, with the first half between 1681- 1743 and the second half covering from 1760 – 1792. All the information collected was assembled into columns, which gave the classification of different criteria as follows;

Ex; Voyage | Date | Title | Name of captain | Replacement | Ethnicity | Base | Ship | Crew | Arrival | Left | Destination | Commodities.

Each entry comes in parts and is identified by the name of the captain of the ship. Quite often the title of the captain is simply mentioned as 'Captain, Encik or Storekeeper.' Every entry comes in a pair as a complete set, in coming ship is paired with out going ship. This was because every ship that entered Melaka, left the port either in the same year, or the year following. In this way, we can verify each entry by examining its counterparts, scrutinizing the date of entry, or its past entry, or the previous voyage. In the harbour masters' list, every entry is also recorded together with the previous entry, date of arrival, date left, duration, and destination.

On the whole, the data was compiled year by year with all entries and voyages for the particular year assembled according to the sequence of the given record. At the end of the day, a large folder contained files with the collected data and it was assembled year by year for easy access. One of the toughest job encountered, was to handle the Dutch cursive writings. To add to

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

the difficulty, one had to get it paired with the other half of the entry as every ship that entered Melaka port would disembark at the port within a very short period perhaps a few days, few months or could even drag to the following year. There were challenges in getting the captains name, as the harbormasters' list did not only consist of European traders but also Chinese, Malays, Indians and other local traders. Therefore, this work had to be done slowly and carefully.

Tables are also plotted in order to compare several aspects of traders and their commodities in and out of Melaka. There are several types of tables such as tables of voyages, base, ship, origin, and destination. The tables are very important, as it is the end product of the compiled data with the information in the form of statistical order. For example, the names of places are difficult to identify, as they are no longer in existence in modern maps. One of the tables, which were difficult to re-construct, was the table of ships' final destination after either a short or a long journey. Destination means the place where the skippers finally ended their journey but at times the destination was not given. The table of destination contained various names of ports all over the Malay Archipelago, Mainland of Southeast Asia and Europe, the Phillipines, India, China and other islands. Thus, small ports or destinations are assembled in headings like Java, Sumatra, Peninsula Malaya and Indian, Chinese and European ports. One will get a clearer picture of the situation by perusing through the tables.

## **Graphs**

Graphs are important to show the rhythm of trade in both the first and second halves of the research period. As it is too huge to plot the graphs in one spreadsheet the study is divided into two periods. However, there are problems with the graphs. In certain years, the entries were incomplete and it did not give the real picture of the trade pattern for that particular year. One has to be careful when dealing with such situations to avoid inaccuracy. In certain periods the graphs show drastic changes in trading patterns, but they were unable to provide a cogent explanation for their occurrence.

Therefore, the graphs have to be accompanied by secondary sources so as to provide suitable explanations.

## Commodities

One unique aspect of the data is that the commodities brought into Melaka by skippers are very well recorded. At times the amount exceeded 25 items with various types of measurements. We can compare the goods with their out going journey where some of the goods were not sold in Melaka but recorded in their outgoing trip as the ship left the port. Thus one can analyse in detail the kind of goods consumed in Melaka and those that left the port through European skippers. At the same time, the pattern of trade can also be traced through the buying pattern of traders at Melaka. The pattern is congruent with the demand and supply of goods.

There are obvious problems in dealing with these data. It is difficult to analyse the commodities as the varieties numbered to more than 20 items per entry during the peak period. They also differ from each entry. Food stuffs were of various types ranging from rice, salted fish, belacan, to birds nest and medicine. Other domestic commodities included spiauter, tin, tutenage, rattan, Japanese copper, aromatic wood and Chinese porcelain. However, the measurement categories were neither uniform nor defined in the same manner. The vast number of commodities and the different kinds of measurement in use made the analysis more difficult because most of those items were no longer available and their names do not make much sense today. For instance, cloths which were largely imported to the archipelago included, gingham, longi (still used by the Burmese like sarong), chitsen, kleeden, guiness, cassa, oetisals, denim and others but these were no longer in use.

There are several types of units and measurements used; kassen for instance was used to measure wine. In another entry, kassen was not used but was replaced by kamen. Therefore, it was a challenge to convert and calculate the commodities for the whole period or even

for a period of ten years. Other types of measurements widely used, include vatjes, aamen, bahar, kranjang, lasten, dozijn, nesten and corgies. One of the units used to measure weight is kranjang which was often used for Chinese tobacco, Javanese tobacco, gambir and lime. However the measurement was not the same for all products. A kranjang for Chinese tobacco was 0.5 pikul but for Javanese tobacco it was 0.2 pikul. However this measurement did not apply for gambir as a kranjang of gambir is approximately 1.2 pikul. From the measurements used, we can see that the weight for commodities is complicated. Certain items were in liquid form, others were either in pieces, heavy or dry. This adds to the problems encountered in the data base. For instance, liquor is counted in can, kassen and fles but grains like rice or heavy materials like salt were counted in koyan, pikul, kisten, corgies, lasten and so forth. There are many other products such as food, butter, rosewater, cloth, and dried fish with their own particular measurement. Other problems include the lack of information in the data, for instance, the base was not given for certain ships, or their origin was not stated. In this case, it was difficult to sum up the total number of ships from the same base or origin for a period of five or ten years. At times, it was difficult to trace the flow of goods, as the record was available for incoming ships and goods but when the ships left the port, the commodities were not stated in detail. Problems also arise in the years after 1761, where commodities were often omitted as the harbour master did not record the items clearly. For instance, Chinese products were not clearly specified and only stated as Chinese wares. Whether they were pottery or utensils is not known. Very often goods were not mentioned at all as most probably there were too many items to be taken care of while the number of entries increased tremendously after 1761.

### **Ship and crew ownership**

Although ships and ownership are two different aspects in trading, traders often co-operated in handling trade. Chinese, English, and Malay traders worked together either in partnership, joint

venture, or by proxy in transporting their goods. Very often, traders did not own the ships, and the journeys were made through chartered ships and crews. As we scrutinize the records, a notable ship owner who had rented a large number of ships to European traders was a rich Malay merchant by the name Encik Zede Lebe.

From the harbour masters' list, traders had a good relationship with one another in the multi racial port society, and they worked together in buying, carrying, and selling goods. The harbour masters' list also provides other types of information including ships that carried letters for the Sultan and their patron. Notes about ships coming to the port with sailing passes were also mentioned and the tolls recorded. Small ships and big crafts also faced problems at sea. Ships often encountered rough weather or ships sunk; at times ships could not go any further because of the different wind direction or political calamities. In such cases, ships often returned to Melaka. These kinds of citations are normally found at the end of the entry.

### **Differences of spellings (names)**

Differences of spelling do occur in the shipping list but these do not affect the accuracy of the data, as the date of entry is congruent with the records in the voyage list. In all recorded data, the entry was double checked. Every trader who came to Melaka would have left the port within a few days, or in a few months time. There would be two entries for every trader; the first entry mentioned the date of arrival of the ship while the second is about the date of departure and destination of ships. In the second entry, the date of arrival would be mentioned again and it fixed the date written in the first entry, which was recorded earlier by the harbour master. In this way, differences in spelling were checked and mistakes were taken care of. For example, in the entry list, the name was stated as Johan Wisbergh dated 20<sup>th</sup> October 1695 but the record for out ship was written Wilberg Johan. We take the stand that Johan Wisbergh was the same person as Wilberg Johan as the date of arrival in the voyage list determined the date of entry.

### **One captain for more than one ship**

The captain was the chief in a ship and his duty was to ensure all shipmen obeyed his directive. Quite often European ships came to Melaka in pairs of more than two ships or a flotilla of ships. The ships were considered under the command of the captain who was responsible for the coming of the ships. Therefore, it was normal that the name of the captain appeared in a few different ships, which came in on the same day. Problems often occurred after 1761, when a flotilla of ships was recorded under one captain upon entry, but these crafts later left Melaka port on different days and under different captains or storekeeper (stuurman). Thus it is difficult to trace the former entries as the crafts were registered under different captains' names.

### **Replacement of captains**

During this period, replacement of captains did occur, as the ship left Melaka with a replacement captain or the ship sailed on behalf of the previous captain. The same information was also recorded in the harbour masters' list. So it is assumed that the ship came in under another captain. For example, on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1719, Pais Leander left Melaka after replacing Intje (Encik) Kantong, so it can be assumed that this ship arrived under Intje (Encik) Kantong as registered under his name upon entry.<sup>6</sup>

### **Margin of error**

In analyzing the statistics of the VOC records, problems in accuracy do exist in the data. As has been said, earlier ship entries came in pairs, the incoming ship, with the outgoing ship. In certain cases, the entries for incoming ships were omitted due to the carelessness of the harbour master or because of too many entries to be handled on the same day. The date of a ship's arrival, and other information such as the base and origin of the ship were recorded in the outgoing entry. In all 275

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<sup>6</sup> VOC 1945, "Shipping List for 1719," p. 121.



incoming entries were constructed for ship arrivals and another 121 entries were constructed for the outgoing ships to make the data complete. For European ships there are 4,615 incoming entries and 4,360 outgoing entries between 1681 and 1792. The counting of the margin of error is through incomplete entries where new entries were reconstructed. The margins of error are counted by the added entries over total entries and multiplied by a hundred. The same theory applies to outgoing ships. The margin of error is very small with 5.95 % for ships entering Melaka and 2.77% for outgoing ships.

The error was larger in the early years but petered out towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This problem also occurs as it was not easy to deal with the massive clerical job in recording the movements of ships, and at the same time had their commodities checked. Quite often ships came in and out at the same time and it is normal for the clerk to miss one or two ships. Fewer mistakes are found at the end of the record as the officers on duty had corrected the weaknesses of the procedure through long years of practice. As the percentage of ship under registration is small, the shipping list is considered reliable for research purposes.

## **Records**

The database shows a unique piece of information with a gap where there were no records for about 17 years. The records are from 1681 – 1742 for the first half while from 1743 – 1760, there were no records of ships going in and out of Melaka. There was a small gap between the years 1685 to 1694. As for the second half, the records were from 1761 -1792. This raises the question of the whereabouts of the missing records.

It was normal that the Chinese, who frequented the port of Batavia, had also played a major role in the Dutch administration and trade centre. However the relationship between the Dutch and the Chinese traders turned sour when a few Europeans were killed by the Chinese. In October 1740, the VOC concluded that the Chinese were plotting a rebellion, for which there was

some evidence. The mutual suspicion finally led to uncontrolled violence on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1740.<sup>7</sup> Chinese houses were looted, shots were fired, and a general massacre took place which claimed 10,000 Chinese lives on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1740. The Europeans and slaves did most of the killing. The Chinese quarters were burned for several days and the fighting which began in Java was to last, almost without interruption for seventeen years.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the records were missing during this period.

In the 1770s there were only 5 junks on average visiting Batavia each year; in the 1730s the number was almost four times higher. In this respect the establishment of a direct trade link between Europe and Canton was very important, besides the expansion of the English country trade between India and China by way of the Melaka Straits.<sup>9</sup> By the 1740s Batavia's days were already over for almost half a century. Instead of being "Queen of the East" it had become the Graveyard of the East where many Europeans, especially those who had newly arrived from the Netherlands after a long voyage, met an early death due to the unhealthy climate, and Batavia's insalubrious sewerage system. Malaria, typhoid and dysentery started to take a heavy toll as death from disease in Batavia was much greater than anywhere else.<sup>10</sup>

### Hans Jurgen Roode

After a 40 year period, the Dutch captured Melaka in 1641, but by 1681 the trading climate in Melaka port was still the same as the previous hundred years. The trade wind was still blowing in the same direction and merchants continued to sail to Melaka using various kinds of crafts. In one corner of Melaka port, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1684 Hans Jurgen Roode, a Burgher, was busy preparing for his business trips to other ports. He started his business in Batavia and sailed from Batavia to Melaka

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<sup>7</sup> Allen Morris Sievers, *The Mystical World of Indonesia: Culture and Economic Developments in Conflict* ( Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press, 1974 ), p. 67.

<sup>8</sup> M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1981), p. 87.

<sup>9</sup> Gerrit Knaap, *Shallow Waters Rising Tide*, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

and back. His trips were few as he operated a small enterprise with just a trip per year in 1684 and another trip in 1698. Another single trip was also recorded in 1700 with his shallop coming from Batavia.

In 1702, Hans Jurgen Roode had moved his trade to Benkalis and all his subsequent trips originated from this port.<sup>11</sup> Hans Jurgen Roode would have met with meagre profits in Batavia, and had opted to avoid the difficulties posted by the VOC and the monopoly system. As Batavia was a port in Dutch hands, small traders had to compete with the VOC and other Chinese traders. In the early Dutch occupation the VOC preferred the skilled Chinese to other traders. Small mercantile operators who were left out either had to cease operation or operate elsewhere.

Hans Jurgen Roode operated his business in local ports and he searched for better ports to carry out his dealings. He carried almost anything from arak, dek kacang, gold, cotton to smear and speck. His commodities consisted of few items, 6 tahils of gold and 200 pieces of small kacang in a single trip or at times no commodities at all when his craft finally anchored in Melaka port. As sole proprietor, Hans Jurgen Roode sailed in a small shallop normally with 10 Christian crew.<sup>12</sup> There were also times when Hans Jurgen Roode hired a gonting from ship owners' like Bruijn Broenken to carry his goods. At the end of 1704, he had undertaken 9 trips to Melaka. His journeys could have been more than that, as there was no record from 1685 until 1694. In 1704 Hans Jurgen Roode came to Melaka 4 times and became very active from this year onwards. His business prospered and his commitments expanded to more trips and the density of commodities also increased.<sup>13</sup>

By 1706, Hans Jurgen Roode already had a son Jacob Roode who was old enough to conduct business and to head a craft to other ports on his own. In 1706 Jacob Roode started to

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<sup>11</sup> VOC 1663, "Shipping List for 1702," pp. 140 - 146.

<sup>12</sup> VOC 1691, "Shipping List for 1704," pp. 20 – 232.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

replace his father although at times both Roodes worked together.<sup>14</sup> By 1708 Hans Jurgen Roode's business was already stable and he took with him 9 items of various goods on his way out to Benkalis.<sup>15</sup> On 13<sup>th</sup> December 1710 Hans Jurgen Roode handed over his business to his son and he retired after being active for 17 years.<sup>16</sup> Hans Jurgen Roode portrayed a typical picture of the local sailor with his small scale enterprise. There were many other such petty traders in the Melaka shipping record like the *Mardijker*, *Burghers*, *Mixties* and *Swarts* who were active in a variety of ports in the Malay Archipelago during this period and before 1742. Their dealings were small, but rather complicated. Traders were free to make agreements with other sailors or ship owners to arrange for their business trips and there were no exact patterns as to how business was carried out. Traders also used various routes to their destinations through both the north east, and south west monsoons.

Sixty eight years later on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1778, Francis Light, an English country trader sailed from Madras to Melaka with his ship the *Bristol*. He was a long distance trader who often frequented Siam. Francis Light represented the more famous English traders who operated across the Indian Ocean. There were many other English traders who operated as long distance merchants carrying merchandise from India to China and on their way they stopped at Melaka. Private English traders won a reprieve after the House of Lords rejected in March 1647 the English Company's petition to safeguard the Company's interest, thus opening the door to all Englishmen to seek wealth and fortune in the East.<sup>17</sup> English traders thus joined in the competition with other European traders in seeking profit in the Malay Archipelago. Francis Light was one of the outstanding figures who managed to succeed and secure a place for English traders to stay put in the East.

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<sup>14</sup> VOC 1729, "Shipping List for 1706," pp. 14 – 290.

<sup>15</sup> VOC 1760, "Shipping List for 1708," p. 66.

<sup>16</sup> VOC 1810, "Shipping List for 1710," p. 112.

<sup>17</sup> D. K. Basset, "European Influence in the Malay Peninsula 1511 – 1786," *Royal Asiatic Society Malayan Branch*, Journal 33 (1960 ): 21- 23.

In 1778 Francis Light came from Siam with 30 koyan of salt and 200 pikul of sappan hout (wood) and the two commodities were discharged from his craft in Melaka.<sup>18</sup> Seven days later, on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1778, he left Melaka port without any goods and headed to Madras.<sup>19</sup> The next year, his ship Bristol with 12 canons and 60 crew entered Melaka port twice, on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1779; his main goods were 30 koyan of salt and 800 pikul Japanese hout (wood). He followed the same familiar pattern, sailing and conducting trade between Madras, and on his way he stopped in a few ports in Siam and Manila before arriving at Melaka.

During his second trip on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1779; he came to Melaka from Kedah. On his return journey he bought 20 pikul of sugar.<sup>20</sup> Francis Light was one of the hundreds of country traders who were active after the 1760s, who plied the long distance trade and conducted business between India and China. Francis Light also had a hand in the local tin trade in Kedah. Country traders had bigger vessels, more crew and the goods they carried were more extensive than the small scale traders of the early 1700s. Canons and other weapons were brought along to ensure a safe journey throughout the long trip. European country traders from India often carried sugar on their return journey to India and Indian ports became one of the most important buyers of sugar from Melaka as well as for local consumption.

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<sup>18</sup> VOC 3525, "Shipping List for 1778," p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>20</sup> VOC 3582, "Shipping List for 1778," p. 27.

## Chapter Two

### European Commercial Activity in the Malay Archipelago Prior to 1680

The arrival of the Portuguese in Melaka in 1498 marked a new era in the political and economic history of the Malay Archipelago. The event marked the beginning of European influence, which eventually led to the rise of colonial rule in Southeast Asia. Economically, the coming of the Portuguese marked the beginning of integration of the archipelago into a world economic system. The European, however, had known about the archipelago and its exotic products long before 1500 A.D. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C, Europeans had been familiar with some of the archipelago's exotic products like camphor, resin, sandalwood and gold. The Greeks and the Romans came to Indian ports to seek these products which were brought over by Indian traders.

Sailing through the Red Sea, the Europeans came to Indian ports to procure the exotic products of Asia.<sup>1</sup> The Indian ports visited by European traders were Gujarat, Surat, and Cambay, all located on the Indian West Coast. Indian traders had travelled frequently to the Malay Archipelago and gathered products from the area and beyond. By the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D, the regular trade between Europe and Indian ports further expanded and this stimulated trade between India and the Malay Archipelago.<sup>2</sup> As a result, in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D, a number of ports had probably developed on the coast of the Malay Peninsula, which supplied local products to the Indian merchants.

The port of Penarikan located between the Rivers of Muar and Pahang is believed to have been visited by Indian traders collecting local products from the archipelago during this period. Local traders brought a variety of goods collected from the hinterlands to the northern Malay Peninsula by the rivers and transported them on land to Penarikan.<sup>3</sup> Locals who lived along two other rivers namely the Jempol and Seriting are believed to have conveyed local products to the

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<sup>1</sup> M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (England: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese* (Kuala Lumpur: University Malaya Press, 1980), p. 167.

market at Penarikan. The Pahang area is said to have supplied a wide range of commodities desired by Europeans such as pepper, nutmeg, mace, camphor, sappan wood, agallochium, porcupine quills and gold dust.<sup>4</sup> Gold dust was the most important among them. This trade in local commodities was conducted in small quantities well below their demand in Europe. Thus in Europe the products from the Malay Archipelago acquired the status of luxuries fuelling their further demand.

In the northern part of the Malay Peninsula, coastal centres soon developed to service the growing number of merchants who travelled with the sea and the overland routes of the Isthmus of Kra. The emergence of Funan and the ports of Southern Vietnam were in response to the growing importance of this trade.<sup>5</sup> The demand for archipelago products reached a new level of intensity with the rise of Funan, one of the early kingdoms or states in the region, which flourished in the early centuries of the Christian era.

According to the Chinese source O-ceo, Funan's main port had been occupied by Malay fishing and hunting groups since the first century.<sup>6</sup> In the third century, Indian envoys had visited this O-ceo port.<sup>7</sup> Facilities were installed, and buildings for storing goods were constructed for merchants. Archaeological remains at O-ceo indicate that the growth of the port is parallel with Funan's agricultural base, which supplied foreign merchants with local products.<sup>8</sup> Funan had also developed elaborate hydraulic projects and drainage systems, which enabled the country to supply enough rice and provisions for merchants. The development of O-ceo did not diminish the roles of other ports in the Malay Peninsula like Penarikan, Serting and Jempol. Together, these ports formed a relationship with the new international route within the Malay Archipelago, and across the Isthmus of Kra to provide passage for Indian and Chinese goods.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth P. Hall, *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, p. 2

<sup>8</sup> Hall, *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia*, p. 78.

The first Malay kingdom, Srivijaya rose to prominence in the 7<sup>th</sup> century after Funan lost its importance. Funan was an international trade centre across the Isthmus of Kra and provided passage for Indian and Chinese goods. Funan's strategic position in trade started to deteriorate at the end of the fifth century and she was succeeded by Srivijaya, a Malay port located on the southeast coast of Sumatera. Srivijaya was able to control effectively both the seas and piracy and this attracted Chinese attention as the port was able to supply local products, Chinese and Western goods, besides providing storage facilities and accommodation for traders.<sup>9</sup> Srivijaya also enjoyed a certain prestige in both the Chinese and Indian markets.

The rise of Srivijaya from A.D 670 until 1025 marked a new phase in trade as more and more spices and other luxury goods made their way to Europe. Srivijaya had the ability to organize hinterland trade and to connect local contacts with the international markets. She was also in control of regional trading centers like Kedah. This encouraged Indian traders to come and buy aromatic wood, spices, pearls, perfumes, camphor, ivory and corals which were later sold to the Europeans in exchange for Western products like silver, porcelain, silk, iron, rhubarb and sugar at Indian ports.<sup>10</sup> The European contacts with the archipelago and its products and indeed with Asia came to a grinding halt sometime in the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>11</sup> This happened, most probably, because the trade conducted was small and the most important commodity, gold, was available elsewhere. They were only revived after 1400, when the trade in spices between Asia and Europe developed rapidly in the age of commerce as Europeans came into contact with the luxuries of Asia through the crusades.

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<sup>9</sup> Hall, *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia*, p. 78.

<sup>10</sup> M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Ltd, 1962), p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, p. 159.



## Rise of Melaka as an emporium

The rise of Melaka around 1400 A.D marked a new phase in relations between Europe and the archipelago. The port of Melaka enjoyed an extra advantage due to its location at the narrow part of the Straits of Melaka that provided protection and shelter to incoming traders.<sup>12</sup> It was free from storms, accessible throughout the year, and this attracted many traders to Melaka. Compared to other ports like Samudra, Pasai and Pidie, which were exposed to the northeast monsoon, Melaka offered a longer trading period than these Sumatran ports. As a Malay state that later converted to Islam, Melaka was also well known among Muslim traders.<sup>13</sup> The rulers of Melaka encouraged Muslims to come in while the earlier relationship with the Chinese kingdom was maintained to her advantage.

As a centre for trade, the port of Melaka was a good harbour complete with godown facilities to store goods. Foreign traders from different countries lived in separate residential areas. As a result, the port drew Chinese junks, Moslem merchants, Javanese, Bengalis and Arabs. Merchants from Persia, India and the Indonesian regions also flocked to Melaka every year.<sup>14</sup> Goods from the East and the West were sold in Melaka through out the seasons.

Through trading contacts, the Europeans came to know about the archipelago as the source of spices and about Melaka as the famous market for spices. In the port of Melaka, traders from the East and West met to exchange goods. In Melaka, goods changed hands in all seasons, although traders from the East could only access Melaka during the monsoon season from November to March. During the northeast monsoon, Indian ships left India from January to March and spent a short time in Melaka before they embarked for home in May.<sup>15</sup> The Chinese traders also used the northeast monsoon, although they would leave China slightly earlier than the Indian traders and sail home with the southwest monsoon in June. During the off season, or when the trade wind was

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<sup>12</sup> Meilink -Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence*, p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

unfavorable, from May to the end of October, the monsoon wind was blowing in the Indian Ocean.<sup>16</sup> Merchants from the West lived in Melaka. On the other hand, Javanese traders used the southwest monsoon and came to Melaka between May and September. Thus the market was kept busy throughout the year.<sup>17</sup>

In India, Gujeratis were among the important merchants who visited Melaka. Gujeratis came in large numbers as they dominated Indian ships from Gujerat at the West Coast of India.<sup>18</sup> Gujerat merchants were mainly Muslim traders and the most important products carried by these traders were textiles, which ranged to twenty types. Some of these traders also carried out business by proxy or came to Melaka in smaller freights.<sup>19</sup> Indian merchants brought cloth, sandalwood, camphor, alum, pearl, earthenware and foodstuffs such as grain, butter and salted meat.<sup>20</sup> Coromandel traders also embarked to Melaka and their shipping was in the hands of both Muslims and Hindus. Coromandel traders bought white sandalwood, camphor, alum, pearls, pepper, nutmeg, mace, and cloves from Melaka to be sold in their home country. Chinese merchants also came to Melaka in junks full of goods, which ranged from silk, musk, rhubarb, camphor, gold, pearls, pottery, and a large amount of raw and woven silk, satin and brocade.<sup>21</sup> Other products were handicrafts, lacquered boxes, elaborate cabinets, fans, and fancy hair ornaments. These were exchanged with pepper as the Chinese consumed large amounts of this product.

In the Malay Archipelago, Javanese traders were among the more active traders who frequented Melaka. Rice and spices were some of the major products that they had brought to Melaka. The spices such as pepper, mace, nutmeg and cloves were produced in nearby regions like Bandas and the Moluccas. In return, the Javanese and Malay traders bought textiles from Indian traders and a variety of goods from Chinese traders. Through Melaka, a large amount of spices were

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. For trade winds also see Charles A. Fisher, *Southeast Asia* ( London: Methuen and Comp.1964 ), pp. 29-34.

<sup>18</sup> Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence*, p. 63.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 36 - 37.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

sent to Europe although very little European goods came in return.<sup>22</sup> Siamese traders also took part in the Melaka mercantile trade although the levels fluctuated. In times of peace, Siamese junks supplied rice, salt, dried fish, arrack, and vegetables to Melaka. Other goods included coarse cloth, lac and benzoin, ivory, lead, tin, silver, gold and sappan wood.<sup>23</sup> However, the Siamese trade was relatively unimportant compared to the Indian trade while the products were mainly Asian goods.

In the Melaka kingdom, it was the nobility like the Bendahara and the sultan, who were involved in the trade, while the actual business was done by the nakhodas who worked for them. The lower section of the Malay population had a small share in trade as most of them were fishermen and involved in some form of cheap handicrafts.<sup>24</sup> One of the most important local products in the market was dried fish. Melaka was an agricultural state, with fixed rules governing the land and its produce, where peasants worked on their orchard or dusun. At times, farmers also cultivated the land of other landowners on a profit sharing basis during the period of tenancy.<sup>25</sup> Although Melaka was surrounded by orchards and rice fields, there were no important products for export as the harvest was just sufficient for local consumption. The people of Melaka were duty bound by the 'hukum daulat - derhaka', which demanded total loyalty to their king and as part of their responsibilities they had to contribute one third of their harvest to the court.<sup>26</sup> As a result, Melaka depended on trade for its income as the port provided ideal facilities for trading and attracted traders from near and far.

The growth of Melaka as an emporium where Europeans, Indians and Chinese traders conducted business alongside local traders was facilitated by a liberal commercial policy, which welcomed all traders. The Sultanate of Melaka had also put in a code of law that ensured smooth operation of all commercial and mercantile activity. Weight measurements were fixed such as cupak,

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>25</sup> Liaw Yock Fang, *The Laws of Melaka* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff), p. 48.

<sup>26</sup> Muhammad Yusoff Hashim & Abdul Rahman Kaeh, *Sejarah Melayu: Persepsi Sejarah dan Kesusasteraan* (Kuala Lumpur: Longman, 1994), p. 144.

gantang, kati and tahlil for trading purposes in small and big ships.<sup>27</sup> Traders from everywhere were bound by the Islamic system of trading and the toll implemented by the Malay court.<sup>28</sup> Commercial matters including the division of goods in ships and settlement of disputes were placed under the jurisdiction of the Melaka syahbandar.<sup>29</sup> The safety and comfort of foreign traders was ensured by a system of residence in specific quarters under the jurisdiction of their own quartermasters or 'syahbandar', who were responsible to the state officials.<sup>30</sup>

While the majority of traders who visited Melaka were indigenous to Southeast Asia, we also find a large number of foreign traders like Indians, Arabs, Europeans, and Chinese. There were also Armenians, Venetians and Turks who came through the Indian ports of Surat and Cambay, which were major markets linked to Melaka. Armenians, Venetians and Turks were found in Mecca, Cairo, Jeddah, Arden and Hormuz.<sup>31</sup> These traders could not reach Melaka in a single monsoon season and they sailed to Gujerati ports like Surat, Randar, Diu and Daman before coming to Melaka. Venetian traders dealt in glassware, that famous product of Italian cities, besides a wide range of goods from West Asia and the Mediterranean. The Venetians also brought valuable merchandise like metals, arms, beads, coral, quicksilver, vermilion, copper nails, and coloured woollen cloths.<sup>32</sup>

These Venetian traders brought valuable merchandise from Cairo to Tor by galleasses of Venice and in Tor, goods were transferred for Jeddah and Aden. Other traders like the Turks, Parsees and Turkomans also came to Gujerat before sailing to Melaka. Therefore European commodities were in high demand and were sold in Gujerat and Cambay before their arrival in Melaka. In Melaka, goods were transacted in a profit sharing basis between European and Indian

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Abu Hassan Sham & Mariyam Salim, *Sastera Undang-undang* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1995), p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> Liaw Yock Fang, *The Laws of Melaka*, p. 134.

<sup>30</sup> Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence*, p. 42.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

traders.<sup>33</sup> The long journey from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean and then to Melaka took 18 months and the trips were full of danger.<sup>34</sup> The Venetians were aware of these dangers. Their trade between Indian ports, and Melaka, was conducted mainly by Indian merchants, and only a few Venetians were able to penetrate the Melaka trade. Occasionally Indian merchants persuaded the Venetians to carry their goods in European ships; they also formed companies of merchants to sail to Melaka. In these companies, Gujaratis and Western traders sailed for Melaka in March. On their return journey they stopped in the Maldives Islands to trade with the locals.

### The coming of the Portuguese

Portugal, one of the most commercially advanced states in Europe in the fifteenth century, knew about the spice trade in the Malay Archipelago much earlier than other Europeans. With the advanced progress of navigation and geography, the Portuguese, led by Vasco da Gama, were the first Europeans to land in Calicut. He subsequently paved the way for the Portuguese to arrive in the Malay Archipelago.<sup>35</sup> The Portuguese trade route to the East went through the Cape of Good Hope and then the eastern side of the Indian Ocean. The main aim of the Portuguese was to procure the luxury spices that were in great demand in Europe. They had to compete with the Egyptians and Venetians in procuring precious metals from Europe for the Asian market.<sup>36</sup> The Portuguese expansion in Asia was mainly concerned with obtaining the Asian spice monopoly and to secure the sole right to transport them.<sup>37</sup> To achieve their aim, the Portuguese diverted the stream of merchandise, especially spices, from Asia to Portugal via the Cape of Good Hope thus eliminating

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<sup>33</sup> Tome Pires, *Suma Oriental of Tome Pires: An Account of the East from the Red Sea to Japan* (Llechenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1967), p. 269.

<sup>34</sup> Wheatley, *Golden Khersonese*, p. 315.

<sup>35</sup> Nicholas Tarling, *A Concise History of Southeast Asia* (New York: Frederick A Praeger, 1967), pp. 32-34.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>37</sup> Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence*, p. 117.

merchants from Asia and Mediterranean from the lucrative trade.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the Portuguese became a new intruder as the spice trade and its transportation was in the hands of Muslims.<sup>39</sup> The Muslims were separated from the Hindus because of religious differences. They also had disputes with the Muslim rulers in North India. The Portuguese supplied firearms and imported horses from Arabia and Persia and sold them to the Indian rulers who needed them for protection from the Muslim expansion. Besides India, the Portuguese power also attempted to control the Red Sea and the Gulf of Cambay but it had little success with the Muslims.<sup>40</sup>

The Portuguese employed naval power to control the Indian Ocean by occupying a number of strategic points to weaken Muslim domination in the spice trade. The Portuguese were aware that the spice monopoly would fall into their hands if they could control the ports linking India and the Malay Archipelago and replacing the Muslims trading network in the Red Sea region. The Portuguese were not interested in acquiring vassals or political hegemony in the Malay Archipelago; they were just interested in the spice trade in the Nusantara region. To facilitate this, the conquest of Melaka was a necessity.<sup>41</sup>

After defeating Goa in 1509, the Portuguese came to attack Melaka in 1511.<sup>42</sup> The main purpose was spices, the lucrative items that were in high demand in Europe. Portuguese expansion in Asia was mainly to obtain the Asian spice monopoly and in particular, the sole right to transport the spice by sea to Portuguese ports including Goa in India.<sup>43</sup> From Goa, the spices were sent to Portugal. The Portuguese were keen to capture Melaka as the port was located in the Malay - Indonesian region and was one of the important spice collecting centre.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> C. R. Boxer, *Portuguese Conquest and Commerce in Southern Asia, 1500-1750* (Variorum: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1985), p. 117.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Victor Lieberman, "Secular Trends in Burmese Economic History, c 1350 – 1830, and their Implications for State Formation," *Modern Asian Studies* 25, 1 (1991), pp. 1 - 31.

<sup>41</sup> Boxer, *Portuguese Conquest and Commerce in Southern Asia, 1500-1750*, p. 119.

<sup>42</sup> Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence*, p. 118.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 117.